



## 8th Legislative District Map

*Sen. Jerome Delvin represents the 8th Legislative District, which includes most of Benton County, including Kennewick, Richland, West Richland, Benton City and Prosser.*



### Sen. Jerome Delvin

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## Town Hall Meetings — March 19th, 2005

Senator Jerome Delvin and Representatives Shirley Hankins and Larry Haler invite you to join us for our 8th District town hall meetings.

### March 19th, 2005

- |                       |                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m.  | Prosser City Hall<br>601 7th Street, Prosser                                          |
| 10:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. | Benton City Community Center<br>802 East 8th Street, Benton City                      |
| 1:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m.   | West Richland Benton REA Building, Community Room<br>6095 West VanGiesen, W. Richland |
| 2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.   | Kennewick City Hall Council Chambers<br>210 West 6th Avenue, Kennewick                |
| 4:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.   | Richland City Hall Council Chambers<br>505 Swift Boulevard, Richland                  |

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**Jerome Delvin**  
Washington State Senator • 8th Legislative District  
2005 Legislative Report

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# Jerome Delvin

## 2005 Legislative Report



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**Committees:**

- Agriculture & Rural Economic Development
- Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education
- Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection

Dear neighbors,

I hope your 2005 is going well so far. The 2005 Legislature is now well underway, and there are many issues important to our local community being considered. I'll update you on those issues in this newsletter.

This newsletter also marks my first as a member of the Washington State Senate. After serving the 8th District in the House of Representatives for 10 years, I'm proud to continue the tradition of strong leadership for our district in the State Senate. Sen. Pat Hale served admirably before me, and I'm excited about the challenges ahead this session.

We do have many challenges that we'll face. This year's session is scheduled to last 105 days. The Legislature is responsible for writing a new state budget this year. It's a daunting prospect that very well could keep us here longer than scheduled. With an estimated \$1.8 billion budget shortfall, we'll have some tough choices to make regarding our spending priorities.

Election reform is another issue to consider this session. With the questions surrounding the race for governor, there are certainly some changes that we need to make to ensure we won't be faced with these same voter irregularities in future elections. I feel strongly that it's important for the public to have confidence that their vote is being counted, and counted correctly.

Of course, if you have questions or comments about any of the issues discussed inside this newsletter, please let me know. Don't hesitate to contact my office in Olympia. If you want to speak with me in person, I'd be happy to meet with you here in Olympia, or you can check out the details of my upcoming town hall meeting on the back of this newsletter.

It continues to be an honor and privilege to serve the great people of the 8th District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jerome Delvin".

Sen. Jerome Delvin

## Budget shortfall will be a challenge in 2005

The Legislature this session is challenged with writing the state budget for the 2005-07 biennium. Just like two years ago, we'll be faced with a significant shortfall between revenues and expenditures.

You may wonder how this can be, when we balanced the budget without raising taxes in 2003. The problem is, despite our efforts to reign in state spending, the cost of things like providing health care continues to rise at a quicker pace than state revenues. Throw in the

fact the Legislature is faced with approving a state employee collective bargaining contract, and costs are projected to exceed revenues by \$1.8 billion. And while the Tri-Cities area economy has remained rather strong over the past few years, the rest of the state economy has still been slow to recover.

What's the solution? I hope we'll continue to look at our state agencies to help save money. Some are suggesting we go straight to tax increases or other gimmicks

to balance the budget, but I think state government itself can find places to continue tightening up. We must also address some of the reasons that health care costs continue to increase – a lack of health care plan options and competition, rising medical malpractice costs, and federal rules limiting our ability to lower the cost of prescription drugs.

The Legislature will have to decide what the priorities of the state should be when it comes to spending your tax dollars.

## Initiative 297 needs fixes

Voters in November approved Initiative 297, preventing the transportation of additional radioactive material to the Hanford Nuclear Reservation until the federal government completes cleanup efforts there. The main goal was to prevent other states from shipping their waste to Washington state.

While I understand the intentions of the sponsors of the initiative, this measure is having some predicted consequences. Namely, the federal government has determined that the language of the initiative limits the collection of ALL radioactive material or waste by the Hanford reservation. Unfortunately, this includes the waste created through use in the medical field.

That development is especially harmful for the burgeoning medical research industry in the Tri-Cities. Many local companies are on the

cutting edge when it comes to developing new radioactive isotopes used for battling prostate cancer and other forms of that deadly disease. If these companies are forced to stop production of their isotopes, not only



will Washington residents lose access to these lifesaving treatments, but the companies will most likely be forced to move to other states, taking valuable family wage jobs elsewhere.

I'm sponsoring a bill this session to clarify the language of the initiative, allowing the disposal of nuclear waste if it's related to the medical industry. I hope my

colleagues in the Legislature will recognize the need to act quickly on this issue.

## Free credit reports now available

If you've bought a home or car recently, you likely know how important your credit rating can be. Your credit rating could be negatively affected for reasons that aren't your fault. Sometimes errors are made on the report and now you have the ability to correct these errors.

As of December 1st, all Washington residents are now eligible for a free copy of their credit report once per year. Just go to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) to request your copy.

Financial advisors recommend that you check your credit history once a year to make sure there are no errors.



## Improving the asparagus market

Asparagus is just one of many products our local farmers produce. In recent years, South American producers have increased their asparagus production, lowering the prices and hurting our local farmers.

I recently visited Peru and met with local officials about the status of Washington state's asparagus industry. Through the efforts of the United State Embassy, I was able to meet with the Peruvian Asparagus Institute. Peru has been a rapidly growing supplier of asparagus.

I think it's important for Peru and the United States to work together to encourage the growth of the asparagus market. I encouraged the growers in Peru to continue developing their domestic market for asparagus, as it's still not an affordable commodity in Peru.

In the end, I think it's a winnable situation for our farmers if we work with these competitors to expand the world market for the asparagus product. California wine growers, for example, fought off competition from Chilean wine growers for a long time. They ended up working together to create a win-win situation for both countries, and I'd like to see the same success for our asparagus growers.

## State sales tax can now be deducted

Tax time is coming around again, and there's a new change Washington residents will want to be aware of. Local and state sales taxes can now be used as a deduction again. The Federal government made the move to allow states like Washington, Texas and Florida which don't have an income tax, to take a standard deduction.

For more information on this change, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), or [www.dor.wa.gov](http://www.dor.wa.gov).



## Restoring parental rights in juvenile mental health

An issue I worked on during the interim and will continue to work on this session is a bill to reestablish a parent's rights over their child's mental health.

The way the system is currently working, if a parent has concerns that their teen or child may be suffering from a mental health issue, the child has the right to refuse treatment, regardless of their state

of mind. Parents have no ability to get the help their child might need, even if the child or teen is in no state of mind to make their own decisions.

The problem is, treatment usually isn't obtained until the teen commits a crime or causes danger to themselves or to others. As a police officer, I've seen cases where

crimes or harmful situations could have been prevented if the parent had been allowed to get treatment for their child without that child's consent.



Senate Bill 5257, which is up for consideration this session, would clarify those rules and allow parents to make the best possible decision for their child. It would allow them to get the

treatment their minor needs before something more serious occurs. And it would make it clear to mental health care providers that parents have this right. It's a bill I'll be supporting this session. With bipartisan support, I think it has a good chance of becoming law.